



Introduction:

- At Woolton Hill Junior school we run a Social and Emotional Learning group called Acorns. This group is based on nurture principles and follows the 6 Strands as a curriculum for social and emotional learning.
- Our school's core values of respect, wisdom and courage will also shape the groups classroom routines, behaviour expectations, reward system and our curriculum. At Woolton Hill Junior school we know that a nurturing and supportive atmosphere is crucial to successful learning.
- The group provides a modified curriculum based on:

The 6 Strands Curriculum (devised by Primary behaviour Support):

1. Boundaries
2. Resilience
3. Focus
4. Respect
5. Self-regulation
6. Independence

The six principles of nurture:

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
 2. The classroom offers a safe base
 3. The importance of nurture for the development of self esteem
 4. Language is a vital means of communication
 5. All behaviour is communication
 6. The importance of transition in children's lives
- The group is a planned intervention for children in Key Stage 2, the group caters for between 6-8 children who meet the groups' criteria for additional social and emotional intervention.
 - The group runs for two afternoons weekly in a separate classroom which is designed specifically with small group nurture activities in mind.
 - The day to day running of the group is led two experienced Teaching Assistants; who have experience of the Key Stage 2 curriculum, have received training from Primary Behaviour Support (PBS) in the 6 Strands Curriculum and are nurture group trained. Regular continuous professional development is provided through PBS and other courses/network meetings. In the absence of one of the team members the nurture

group will not run but 1:1 work and/or classroom visits will be carried out by the remaining member of the team. The curriculum for the group, the progress and attainment of the group is the strategic responsibility of the Deputy Head Teacher.

Our Aims:

- To provide a small-scale classroom setting in which children can experience nurturing care from two caring adults.
- To provide a strong sense of belonging for children in the group but also their own classrooms.
- To have a predictable, calm and purposeful environment and timetable.
- To provide a language rich learning environment.
- To develop self-esteem through learning social skills, taking responsibility and understanding their individual strengths.
- To help children to grow in confidence about learning.
- To develop relationships between adults and children, building trust, confidence and reliability.
- To develop positive, healthy peer relationships – learning about collaboration and kindness.
- To develop responsibility for self and others.
- To help children to learn to make wise choices about their own behaviour through understanding consequences of certain ways of behaving.
- To work in partnership with parents and teachers to achieve consistency of approach at home and school.
- To provide ongoing assessment of Social Emotional Learning (SEL), behaviour and engagement through use of assessment tools such as the Leuven Scale and 6 Strands.
- To help children to develop their resilience for learning and their enjoyment of learning.

Inclusive Practice:

In the group we recognise that every child matters and aim to respond to each child's needs, taking into consideration their:

- cultural background;
- life experiences;
- strengths;
- communication needs;
- emotional and social needs;
- developmental needs;
- physical needs.

Setting:

- The group is a self-contained classroom setting with kitchen facilities, access to outdoor learning space and close access to toilet facilities. The group and have sole use of the room when the group meets with as little interruptions as possible.
- The room has a calm, homely atmosphere.

- The room provides space for a group carpet space, group activities, play areas, outside play area, quiet area and an area for quiet reflection away from others if a child needs to address emotional or behavioural difficulties.

The role of the adults:

Teaching Assistants leading the group:

- The role of the adults is to sustain nurturing relationships with the children who attend.
- They should be good role models, demonstrating appropriate and positive behaviour that is consistent and continuous.
- They recognise that it is through a positive and affirming relationship that a child can perceive themselves as worthwhile.
- To provide opportunities for children to express their feelings.
- To deliver a curriculum that is suited to each child's needs.
- To work as a team and support each other.
- To liaise with the Class Teacher to; share positives, develop a sense of belonging in both their class and nurture group, to enable clear communication about individual targets and progress.
- To liaise with the Deputy Headteacher.
- They need to recognise that it is through a positive and active partnership with parents that school and home can work together in the development of their children.
- To ensure the nurture room environment and curriculum fits our aims.

Deputy Headteacher/SENDco (DHT):

- The role of the DHT is to work collaboratively with the groups Learning Support Team.
- To support the groups curriculum develop; through supporting the planning of activities and ensure the curriculum supports the needs of each child.
- To support the strategic development of the group; through regular monitoring and evaluation activities.
- To develop professional development opportunities for the staff involved in running the group.
- To lead and run formal reviews as required.
- To liaise with other professionals when appropriate.
- To develop positive and active partnership with parents and plan ways to engage parents through providing learning development opportunities, good communication and possible opportunities to spend time in the group with their child.

The curriculum:

- The nurture group provides a modified curriculum that is suited to the developmental needs of the child.
- The curriculum is driven by the teaching specific social and emotional skills through The 6 Strands Curriculum (devised by Primary behaviour Support).
- Mathematics and English are covered during the morning in the child's own classroom.

- During the afternoon group sessions children will miss some curriculum content from their own classroom; teachers will rotate the subjects missed and aim to ensure children continue to access PE, PSHE and Science lessons in class.
- The group covers PSHE and there may be opportunities for child to take part in art, science, drama and PE activities. Areas such as cooking, outdoor learning and gardening are also included.
- The group will provide opportunities to develop emotional awareness and regulation through activities in PSHE as well as opportunities to try relaxation, mindfulness, positive touch, outdoor learning.
- The group will provide opportunities to develop language and communication skills. The group will provide an oral and visually language rich learning environment.
- The group may provide opportunities to develop children's understanding of new concepts, topics and skills before they might encounter them in their mainstream classroom setting; for example through pre-teaching a text, skill or concept.
- The group will give children opportunities to learn age appropriate life skills and social skills; for example table manners, laying the table, washing up, tidying up, conversation at the table.
- The group sessions are divided into small chunks of time with each activity serving a clear purpose.
- Each session offers the security of consistency and familiar structure as follows:

greeting ritual;
circle time activities;
designated activity/6 Strands learning of the day;
free play;
tidy up time and laying the table for snack;
social eating time;
regulation time;
ending ritual.

- Circle time activities focus on the following valuable activities:

turn taking;
watching and listening;
using expressive language;
learning from others;
trying something new;
developing a positive attitude to participation; forming positive relationships;
using agree codes of behaviour;
initiating activities with others;
learning to respond to sanctions;
considering the rights and needs of themselves and others.

- Activities are designed to offer children criteria for doing well that guarantee success. The aim is to boost a child's self-esteem and sense of identity.

Assessment:

- Children involved in the group are assessed using the 6 Strands walls on a termly basis.
- After an assessment, findings are discussed with the group team, class teacher/TA and SENCO/DHT.
- After an assessment each child will have child friendly 6 Strands targets for their time in the group and in their own classroom. Targets will be reviewed regularly between the group team and class teachers.
- In addition, further assessment of children's progress in Social Emotional Learning (SEL), behaviour and engagement may be regularly taken to determine children's progress.

Referral:

The following types of children will be considered for inclusion in the group:

- Children who fail to make the expected progress in social, emotional learning by the end of Key Stage 1 or during Key Stage 2 and are unable to fully and successfully engage in the curriculum with their peers. They might for example demonstrate; ongoing; difficulties with social skills, a lack of focus in their learning, immature behaviour which impacts significantly on learning, difficulties with self-regulation, ongoing impulsive, or inappropriate behaviour, a lack of resilience for learning which impacts on engagement and progress, significant emotional insecurity, which could present as a lack of self-acceptance, low self-worth or a lack of trust.
- Children working at targets on the 6 Strands wall significantly below their chronological age. They might for example be working on more than one strand on the 6 Strands wall 2 when they are in Year 6 and would be expected to be working on 6 Strands wall 5.

The group will run for a half term and then children will generally be expected to return full time to the classroom and apply their new social and emotional skills. Some children might need longer in the group to develop new skills and be ready to apply them in the classroom. Some children might benefit from regular 'Acorns check ins' with the groups staff to support them in applying their new skills within the classroom once the group sessions have finished.

Staff and parents can make a referral for their child to join the group, these will then be assessed to determine if they reach the criteria set out above. The group is for 6-8 children and so if the group is full a child can be placed on our Acorns waiting list for inclusion in one of the following half terms.

Partnership with parents and carers:

- We recognise the importance of involving parents/carers of a child in their education.
- Initially parents will be notified by a letter inviting their child to join the group. Parents can access and read the groups policy on the school website.
- Parents/carers could also be invited to a consultation with the DHT, their child's class teacher and any other professionals involved with their child. This consultation may take

the form of a child centred planning meeting (PCP) and would also involve their child for a short time in the meeting. Clear outcomes and targets will be set within the PCP meeting.

- We aim to keep parents/carers informed of their child's progress and provide them with support and advice.
- We aim to provide parents of child in the group with opportunities to learn more about how to support their child at home and throughout their school life journey. This may be through information sent home and through invitations to workshops and parent events at school.
- Parents can discuss any concerns or issues by talking initially to their child's class teacher or directly to group staff or DHT/SENDCo.

Success Criteria:

We shall be a successful nurture group if:

- we provide affirming, positive and manageable sessions;
- a session's routines provide security;
- the activities are tailored to enable children to feel successful;
- the activities are tailored to provide opportunities to practice the school learning values;
- the children are given unconditional warmth and acceptance;
- there is a focus on activities which promote positive healthy peer relationships;
- the children have greater levels of engagement in their classroom,
- the children gain confidence and are more willing to take on new challenges;
- the children gain a better understanding of how to make good behaviour choices;
- the sense of success enables the children to put more effort into their work;
- there is plenty of humour and fun!

Link to other policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Link to The 6 Strands Curriculum (devised by Primary behaviour Support)
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/11Gy1SBIHSWFYyPJnjV0iL9IUTe2ou7Om/view>